

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Nevada County Transportation Commission

FROM: Daniel B. Landon, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report for the September 17, 2003 NCTC Meeting

DATE: September 11, 2003

1. STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

On the subject of the 2004 STIP schedule, Caltrans stated that the Fund Estimate is not scheduled to be adopted until December 2003. The Commissioners expressed concern that the STIP adoption schedule allow enough time for approval of Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (FTIPs) and asked that CTC staff and the regions work together on developing a schedule that works. Approval of FTIPs for the Metropolitan Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and Caltrans is an action that keeps federal funds flowing into the State.

Attached is a listing from the current STIP showing Nevada County's STIP projects. These are the projects that have been or may be effected by the CTC's freeze on STIP allocations.

2. IDAHO MARYLAND ROAD/EAST MAIN STREET INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

On Friday September 5th NCTC staff participated in a stakeholders meeting. There were twenty-six individuals at the meeting, including representatives of the City of Grass Valley, owners of businesses adjacent to the intersection, Nevada County Business Association (NCBA), Nevada County Contractors Association (NCCA), Nevada County Board of Supervisors, Sierra College Nevada County Campus, and Caltrans.

The meeting was conducted by Grass Valley Mayor Patti Ingram. Grass Valley staff gave presentations on the need for improvement of the intersection and possible interim improvements. Dan Landon and Grant Johnson (PRISM Engineering) presented the improvement project concept that has been developed over the last nine months and gave an overview of site constraints and right-of-way needs. Owners of adjacent businesses commented on the project concept and representatives of NCBA and NCCA commented on the broader community need for improvement of the intersection. Based on the comments made at the meeting, Grant Johnson discussed some possible modifications to the design. Jim Brake, from Caltrans District 3, provided Caltrans perspective on the project concept, the proposed modifications, and potential interim solutions.

As a result of the discussion at the meeting, Mr. Johnson is to update the concept graphics using the latest Grass Valley aerial photography and global positioning system locations for driveways near the intersection. He will also include the following modifications suggested by Mr. Brake:

- Reduce Idaho Maryland to a single westbound lane.
- Provide pedestrian refuges on north and east legs of the intersection.
- Expand the graphics to include Scandling Avenue.
- Remove pedestrian access across freeway ramps.

Grant Johnson will also update the cost for constructing the first phase of the improvement, using the revisions proposed at the meeting and with assistance from Grass Valley staff on the cost of drainage and other related improvements. These revisions are to be completed by September 23rd for use at the next stakeholders meeting on October 3rd. Once the community has reached agreement on the improvement project concept, a Concept Approval Report (CAR) will need to be submitted to Caltrans. NCTC staff are looking into the process and cost of completing the CAR. Thus far it appears that the cost of completing the CAR and the associated engineered design graphics will be approximately \$50,000.

3. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION MITIGATION FEE STATUS REPORT

The updated Regional Transportation Mitigation Fee (RTMF) approved by NCTC at their June meeting has been approved by Grass Valley and Nevada City. The updated RTMF has been included in the Nevada County mitigation fee update and a public hearing has been scheduled for September 23rd at 11:00 a.m.

4. EASTERN NEVADA COUNTY TDP UPDATE

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. have revised the *Eastern Nevada County Transit Development Plan (ENCTDP) Draft Report* to address the revisions required due to the Town of Truckee's change of transit contractors. The revised *ENCTDP Draft Report* will be presented to the Truckee Town Council on October 16th for review and comment. The *ENCTDP Final Report* will then be presented to the Nevada County Transportation Commission for final review and acceptance.

5. SR 89/I-80 INTERCHANGE ROUNDABOUTS

A Project Development Team (PDT) meeting is scheduled for September 18th at Caltrans District 3 Headquarters. The purpose of the PDT meeting is to review the Concept Approval Report submittals, including:

- Geometric Layout & Typical Sections.
- Drainage.
- Sign structures, roadside signing, and pavement delineation.
- Stage construction approach of improvements/Traffic Handling Plan/Lane Closure Chart.
- Maintenance access (pull-off areas landscape, etc).
- Environmental (CEQA & NEPA & Permits).

The project development schedule is shown below:

- Concept Approval Report (CAR): September 22, 2003.
- Draft Combined PSR/PR: November 4, 2003.
- 65% Complete Submittal: November 11, 2003
- 95% Complete Submittal: January 14, 2004

6. STATE HIGHWAY RELINQUISHMENT

At the April 2003 NCTC meeting, there was discussion regarding the potential of re-routing SR 174 from the SR 174/Brunswick Road intersection, following Brunswick Road to the proposed extension of Dorsey Drive, and onto the Dorsey Drive Interchange, and relinquishing the existing SR 174 alignment to the County. The information below regarding “relinquishment” of State Highways has been gathered for the Commissioners use.

In a letter to Caltrans District Directors, dated April 9, 2003, Caltrans Chief Engineer, Brent Felker, noted the following points:

Section 73 of the Streets and Highways Code allows the California Transportation Commission (Commission) to relinquish state highways. Options for relinquishment include: deletion of a state highway by legislative enactment, superseding the existing state highway by relocation, or an agreement with a local agency to accept collateral facilities that are not part of the main traveled way and are constructed by a state highway project.

There are several benefits to relinquishing facilities that are no longer required to serve regional and statewide needs:

- The relinquishment of applicable facilities allow local agencies to be more responsive to community interests in the administration, planning, construction, and operation of that facility. The result is a cost savings to taxpayers by eliminating the need for State encroachment permits.
- Reduction of ongoing maintenance costs.
- Reduction in tort liability.
- Decrease in incidence response efforts.
- Decrease competition for capital funds for regional and statewide improvements.

When relinquishing a state highway there may be occasions when it is appropriate for the Department to perform work or to provide financial contributions to the local agency to ensure that the facility meets a “state of good repair”. Historically the rule of thumb used for “state of good repair” has been a 10-year rehabilitation project.

When viewed from the local agency perspective, nearly every item listed by Mr. Felker as a benefit to the Department could be a negative impact to the local agency.

In September 1996, legislation was enacted that defined the state highway system as consisting of routes that are designated as having statewide or regional significance. The legislation further defined a relinquishable highway system consisting of routes that are determined as having local significance. The stated intent of the legislature was that the state highway system shall be under state jurisdiction, and the relinquishable highway system shall be under the jurisdiction of the appropriate agency that will be most responsive to the public interest in the administration, planning, and construction of the facility. Route 174 was included in the Relinquishable Highway System. Relinquishable Route 174 was identified from Route 80 near Colfax to Route 20 near Grass Valley.

Routes in the state relinquishable highway system are to be maintained, constructed, and improved out of moneys received in the State Highway Account. State highways in the relinquishable highway system or portions thereof, relinquished to a county or city, are to continue to receive funds

for maintenance out of moneys received in the State Highway Account after they have been relinquished to a local agency.

Chapter 25 of the Caltrans Project Development Procedures Manual addresses Relinquishments. A summary of issues involved with relinquishment follows:

- ❑ Responsibilities: At the earliest possible time during the scoping process, the district and the local agency should come to a clear understanding of each party's financial responsibilities.
- ❑ Programming: Costs for proposed relinquishment work should be covered in a Project Study Report (PSR) and Project Report (PR) for the relocation project and should include specific recommendations for placing the existing highway in a state of good repair prior to relinquishment. Prior to completion of the PSR or PR on projects involving rehabilitation of distressed pavement, the Pavement Consultant Services Branch, of the Office of Materials Engineering and Testing Services, of the Engineering Service Center, should perform a pavement deflection study. For proper project scoping and cost estimating, the pavement deflection study should be no more than 1.5 years old.
- ❑ Justification of Work: Rehabilitation work proposed as a condition of relinquishment must be justified. This includes corrective work on bridges, culverts, curbs, drains, pavement, pedestrian facilities, or other facilities that are part of the highway in order to place the facility into maintainable condition. In no case is the pavement rehabilitation design life to be in excess of 10 years.
- ❑ The Streets and Highways Code requires that relinquishment of roads, streets or highways must be made by CTC resolution.

These requirements are to insure that both agencies involved in the relinquishment fully understand and agree to the conditions of the relinquishment agreement. It would seem that in the case at hand, studies would have to be performed on both SR 174 and Brunswick Road.

In addition to the studies mentioned above, John Rumsey with Nevada County DOTS, pointed out the need for detailed analyses of accident data, origin and destination studies, and the traffic impacts of the proposed construction of the Dorsey Drive extension to Brunswick Road and the Dorsey Drive Interchange. These analyses would all need to be factored into any decision to exchange existing SR 174 for Brunswick Road. Mr. Rumsey also identified the following points:

In favor of the exchange:

- Brunswick carries more traffic.
- Brunswick has a higher design speed.
- Access points are more limited on Brunswick.
- SR 174 to SR 20/49 access is complicated.

Against the exchange:

- Loss of local control. Brunswick would have to compete with other state facilities for improvements.
- Locally funded projects would have to go through the Caltrans process adding cost and delay.

- Designating Brunswick as the State Route could add significant traffic to the more congested route and trigger additional improvements on Brunswick.

County Negatives:

- Grass Valley's Sphere extends out further on Brunswick than on SR 174. Therefore the County would end up with more roadway to maintain.
- Cedar Ridge access is poorly managed.

All of the information above indicates that while SR 174 is eligible for relinquishment, very detailed, costly, and time-consuming analyses would be necessary to determine whether an exchange of route designations would be in the best interest of either the State or Nevada County.

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